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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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S-E-C-R-E-T

COUNTRY USSR (Komi ASSR)

REPORT

25X1

SUBJECT Conditions at Vorkuta

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REFERENCES

25X1

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

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1. [redacted] report [redacted] containing information on conditions at Vorkuta (N 67-30, E 64-00).
2. Included in the report is brief information on the power plant and the coal mines at Vorkuta; population; the political climate; living conditions; and climate.

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Vorbuta - early 1955

1. In early 1955 about 25 shafts were producing in the Vorbuta area, as the other 17 were exhausted or the seam was lost.
2. 2 brickyards, a cement factory, & the large thermal electric station were built between 1951-55 at great expense - at full capacity the TES will require a large part of Vorbuta coal production. The foundations for the turbine halls, which are about 50 m. high, ~~were~~ were driven down 80 m, partly in rock.

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the turbine hall is about 16 stories high, & an 80-m high chimney tower over the hall; ~~the chimney~~ metal rings are built into the chimney 6 or 7 per meter, equidistant from each other. The TES building is surrounded by a large number of other buildings - 4-story factory buildings, a large lifting crane, warehouses, & similar buildings. The purpose of

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this oversized TES was not clear
Possibilities were mentioned of ~~supplying~~
other industrial areas, thermal
experiments in the area, creation of
large amounts of energy for ~~nuclear~~
research. The plant has to be ~~run~~
run by heat as suitable water
power is not available & the
wind is not dependable & of
hurricane velocity.

3. Shaft 7, one of the best producers,
loaded an average of 25 4-axle
cars (60 tons each) i.e. 1,500
tons of coal, in 24 hours. An
annual output of about 500,000
tons would appear correct from the
figures. Caloric content of the coal
is low - its very young bituminous
coal, almost lignite in some
shafts. Technical equipment is good
from both production & safety viewpoints.

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the equipment equaled the
German, the safety equipment was
better than the German, but the
effect was less, since Soviet
working discipline & respect for

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one's own & others' lives were less.

4 In 1952 80% of the Vorshuta population was prisoners, & 20% spies. About 30 camps in the area contained a total of 100,000 prisoners. In 1955 the number had dropped considerably, as about 50% of the prisoners had been amnestied or released to live compulsorily in the Vorshuta area. Those who left the area were replaced by Ukrainians, ~~or~~ discharged soldiers, or Konsomols. Population of Vorshuta & other cities in the area had increased a good deal. The population of the Vorshuta area in 1955 was said to be 120,000.

5 Changes ⁱⁿ political climate ~~started~~ started with Stalin's death & continued after the shooting of Beria & Abramov. Signs of a change were amnesty of minors, and political prisoners willing to work, religious tolerance. Transfer of

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the mines from the MVD to the Railroad Ministry, & improving conditions to compare with those of free workers. Rest homes, holiday on Sunday & official holiday, better stock in the camp stores, increased issuance of permits to reliable prisoners to visit outlying areas without escort, bank accounts for prisoners, permission to order unavailable items by mail with corresponding reduction of accounts. Other signs are ~~increased~~ ^{more of} allowances to farmers to return their own produce (noticed in greater sale of food by farmers in railroad stations), & better treatment of foreigners (permission to write).

Prison food was inadequate, because the officials administering it stole too much. All prisoners had to perform a remunerative labor in order to purchase necessary food.

Climate is polar - 9 months winter, 2 months spring & autumn, & 2 months (July & August) summer. The ground thaws to 2 meters in spring - summer.

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Below that is 2-8 meters of
permafrost. Winter characterized by
extreme cold + heavy snow + fog.
Last 2 years snow + ~~to~~ cold
decreased. Winter 54-55 December +
January temperatures of -12° to -1° ,
unheard of among natives of the
area.

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